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ABSTRACT

Major adult literacy and adult education programs in India are described in the brochure, which covers a wide sector of interests and target groups. Major programs described are: (1) mass literacy programs, discussing demography and various strategies; (2) Kisan Saksharta Yojana, discussing various strategies for farmers' functional literacy programs; (3) production of literature for neo-literates, examining ways to provide appropriate material; (4) adult schools, examining part-time educational offerings; (5) library services, discussing facility expansion; (6) adult education of workers, describing training; (7) Polyvalent Adult Education Centers (Shramik Vidyapeeths), describing a network of centers providing general, vocational, civic, cultural and aesthetic aspects of education; (8) extension education, describing agricultural education programs through agricultural universities; (9) national board of adult education, describing its formation and functions; (10) universities, adult and continuing education, describing the integration of adult education concepts into universities; (11) voluntary effort and adult education, describing various voluntary organizations and institutions involved with literacy education; (12) mass media in adult education, describing the educational use of radio, television, films, and newspapers; (13) programs for non-student youth, describing various activities; (14) research and evaluation, examining various studies and research needs. (LH)

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A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY:

ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

Brochure released on the occasion of

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

(*September* 8, 1973)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & SOCIAL WELFARE
DIRECTORATE OF ADULT EDUCATION
NEW DELHI

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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"We in India are today attempting to build a new society in which our common people will get a square deal. This is a tremendous job requiring the willing cooperation and hard work of our teeming millions. It will not be possible for us to release the unbounded energies of our people for national reconstruction unless we educate and motivate them on right lines. It is precisely with this view that the concept of Functional Literacy has been evolved. We should plan to wipe out the illiteracy within a decade or so and we must draw concrete plans for this purpose."

SHRI V. V. GIRI,
President of India
New Delhi, March, 1973.

"Literacy, of course, is the base on which a country can be built. By itself, I do not think, it is so important. But it does open out new worlds to a person. I personally cannot imagine what life would be like if I could not read and through books meet new people, new ideas and get to know many things which would otherwise be beyond my horizon.....I am sure that this work will expand and help us to bring new life which we want in our society and give a new trend to the thinking of our rural people."

SMT. INDIRA GANDHI,
Prime Minister of India
Hyderabad, February, 1972.

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FOREWORD

The 8th September was proclaimed International Literacy Day at the historic World Conference of Ministers of Education at Teheran in the year 1965. Since then, the International Literacy Day is celebrated in different countries of the world every year. The celebrations include activities such as organisation of radio and television programmes, public meetings, exhibitions, dramatic and cultural performances, film shows, release of new posters and publications, bringing out of special issues of periodicals and journals, issue of special postage stamps, appeals and messages by Heads of States and other authorities etc. Stress has also been laid on operational activities such as inauguration of literacy campaigns, opening of library centres and publication of new teaching and reading materials. As our former President, late Dr. Zakir Husain said in 1967 "To us, in India, the recommendations of the Teheran Congress have two-fold significance; they stand as a luminous landmark in man's up-hill struggle towards knowledge and the perfection of his spiritual, social and economic potential and thus symbolise the highest ideals of our nation. Secondly, this anniversary is a timely reminder to us and people throughout the world suffering from this scourge of illiteracy to intensify national action for the redemption of the pledge taken at Teheran".

The main objective of these celebrations, should, therefore, be to awaken public opinion regarding the need to eradicate mass illiteracy and to emphasise the participation all concerned in the programmes directed towards eradication of illiteracy from the masses. These celebrations should also help to stimulate every community to examine its own local situations and to undertake some concrete programmes in this direction. We should consider

afresh, in particular, the slow rate of growth of literacy in different States. The gravity of the situation has to be realised and instead of celebrating the International Literacy Day in the usual routine form, we should focus our attention on the problems of adult literacy in the country in a comprehensive manner. Evolving a comprehensive programme during the 1970s which could show sizable impact in eradicating illiteracy from the country could be aimed at.

I have much pleasure in releasing this Brochure which describes the major programmes in the field of Adult Education and Adult Literacy in India.

KANTI CHAUDHURI,
Joint Secretary
Government of India
Ministry of Education & Social Welfare.

New Delhi
September 8, 1973.

MAJOR PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION AND ADULT LITERACY IN INDIA

The Education Commission (1964-66) which among other things, considered the entire gamut of Adult Education in the country, made the following observation :

"Education does not end with schooling but it is a life-long process. The adult today has need of an understanding of the rapidly changing world and the growing complexities of societies. Even those who have had the most sophisticated education must continue to learn; the result is obsolescence".

After discussing the major plans in the strategy of a society determined to achieve economic development, social transformation and effective social security in a society in which masses of people have missed schooling and in which the education given has not been as relevant to the development needs as we would have desired, the Commission explained the functions of adult education in a democracy as "providing every adult citizen with an opportunity for education of the type which he wishes and which he could have for his personal enrichment, professional advancement and effective participation in social and political life". The Commission has further observed that in normal conditions, programmes of adult education presume universal literacy. In the Indian context, however, where about 70 per cent of the people are unable to read and write, eradication of illiteracy naturally becomes a matter of immediate national concern. An attempt has been made in the following pages to describe, in broad outline, the major programmes in the field of Adult Literacy and Adult Education in India under fourteen sections.

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I. MASS LITERACY

Programmes for Mass Literacy continue to assume increased importance as the country strives to achieve greater progress in all areas of development. However, in spite of voluntary and government efforts, the magnitude of the problem has not diminished; rather, in absolute terms, there are many more illiterates in the country now than in any previous year. It is estimated that in the age-group 15-44 which is an important segment of population, there are more than 160 million illiterates. The number of illiterates in the younger age-group 15—25 is estimated to be over 61 million. In order to meet the situation, schemes of mass literacy utilising all possible and available approaches, agencies and media are being initiated. The Central Advisory Board of Education in its 35th session recommended that a more massive programme for the removal of illiteracy should be launched and that a substantial allocation should be made for the purpose. The Board particularly emphasised the programme of liquidation of illiteracy in the age-group 15-25. Accordingly there is a proposal to undertake a massive programme for the liquidation of illiteracy among youth in the age-group 15-25 during the Fifth Five Year Plan.

The strategy proposed for launching this mass programme would be on the lines indicated by the Task Force on Adult Education of the Planning Commission namely :

(a) at least a small part of every district in the country should be brought under the programme so that the impact of development programme and the processes of liquidation of illiteracy in the country should reach every district during the Fifth Five Year Plan;

(b) for motivational purposes, the programme would be woven around the interest of various groups with the

objective of developing vocational competence along with literacy skills. In addition, the content of the programme would also include family life education;

(c) the mass media particularly the radio, film and TV should be put to service in a big way in the implementation of the programme; and

(d) as a programme of this magnitude would need a large human force for execution, it would involve students, ex-service-men, youth coordinators of the Nehru Yuvak Kendras, rural educated youth and voluntary organisations. The number of people to be covered under this programme is of the order of about 50 millions.

Some of these schemes undertaken in the rural and urban areas include literacy programmes run by National Service Scheme volunteers; programmes organised by voluntary agencies; programmes organised through the State Education Departments and other official agencies and pilot-projects in rural areas on the lines of the *Gram Shikshan Mohim* of Maharashtra. This programme of Mass Literacy has generated a new kind of mass movement and has great potentials for development. It has also been possible to link this mass approach of literacy effectively with Functional Literacy. The success of the *Gram Shikshan Mohim* encouraged the students of West Bengal in 1965 to initiate a mass literacy campaign in the rural areas. The initial funds for this campaign were collected through blood-donation programme. Hundreds of students came forward and participated in this campaign after attending the short course of training. The response from the rural folk has also been encouraging. The West Bengal Committee to Eradicate Illiteracy has been spearheading this programme in which thousands of students are participating.

A National Convention against illiteracy was organised by this Committee recently with a view to focussing the attention of

the nation on the major problem of illiteracy in the country. Some State Governments are proposing to organise such Conventions at State levels. The State of Rajasthan organised a State Convention in August, 1973. The Committee is also doing useful work in the field of preparation of teaching and reading materials for neo-literates and audio visual aids, primarily for motivational purposes.

II. KISAN SAKSHARTA YOJANA (FARMERS' FUNCTIONAL LITERACY)

Kisan Saksharta Yojana (Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme) is one of the three components of the integrated Project of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy jointly operated by the ministries of Education, Agriculture and Information & Broadcasting. The Project recognises that adult practising farmers would be interested in literacy if it comes to them as part of the process of employing new techniques for improving their agricultural production. The Functional Literacy Programme in India has a dual role to play. As an integrated component of the joint Project, it acts as a service programme in so far as it helps to improve the efficiency of the farmers in the programme of agricultural production. At the same time it is also linked with the World Experimental Literacy Programme of UNESCO and herein it assumes the role of an experimental project.

Started in 1967-68, in three districts, the functional literacy component progressively moved upto 10 districts in 1968-69; to 25 districts in 1969-70; to 60 districts in 1970-71; and to 80 districts in 1971-72. In 1972-73, 26 new districts were proposed to be covered under the programme bringing the total to 106 districts (selection of 101 districts has so far been finalised). By March, 1973, 1,21,805 illiterate farmers had passed the Functional Literacy course; while 1,28,040 adults were

reported to be currently enrolled in the Functional Literacy classes. Although the situation varies considerably from State to State and even more from district to district, by and large, the Functional Literacy component made a substantial progress in 1972-73 as compared to the previous years. The progress related both to wider coverage in terms of number of districts and greater involvement of farmers in the programme. Progress has been made in the production of appropriate literature and this material is now available in ten different languages. Orientation courses have already been organised for Key Personnel in Functional Literacy in almost all the States/Territories covered under the programme. Training courses for Functional Literacy supervisors and teachers have also been organised.

Evaluative studies on the impact of the Functional Literacy Programme have shown some positive results. The studies have revealed that the programme of Functional Literacy has developed literacy skills of varying degrees of utility, disseminated knowledge of improved agricultural practices, speeded up the adoption rate of these practices and effected certain attitudinal changes. There is also abundant evidence to indicate that the Functional Literacy training has a positive influence in making an impact on agricultural knowledge and adoption of innovations. These indeed are encouraging results.

The Directorate of Adult Education is preparing the problem-oriented curricula and instructional materials for Functional Literacy participants in a few selected areas. Evaluative studies have been taken up in Jaipur District to serve not as *ex-post facto* study conducted after the programme is over but to follow an experimental design at three points in time which will indicate the impact of the programme as well as provide feed-back for programme improvement. A study on Organisational, Administrative and Communication Aspects of Functional Literacy Programme and its Socio-economic Impact on the Farmers has also been planned in Udaipur district. The reporting sys-

tem has been improved and it is hoped that we shall be on a more sound and firm footing in respect of information on the progress of the Functional Literacy programme in the country. Deficiencies observed in the implementation of the programme as well as difficulties encountered in the field are being looked into. Thus a continuous system of feed-back has been ensured. This includes the communications issued from time to time to the State Governments and District Project authorities stressing the need for streamlining the administrative and financial procedures, setting up of coordination committees, organisation of orientation and traning programme for different categories of personnel, appointment of full-time Project Officers, conducting base-line surveys before initiating the Project and production and distribution of instructional and follow-up materials. A plan of field visits by the officers of Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Adult Education on a regular basis to the different districts has been chalked out and joint teams of officers from the three concerned ministries are planned to be taken up with a view to strengthening the much-needed integration particularly at the field level. In addition to the FTL News issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, a Quarterly Adult Education Newsletter has been brought out by the Directorate of Adult Education recently. The programme of Functional Literacy is proposed to be continued during the Fifth Five Year Plan. In addition to the HYVP areas, the programme may be taken up in other areas such as dry-farming, small and marginal farmers' projects, crash schemes for rural employment and pilot intensive rural employment project.

The Functional Literacy programme in India had the advantage of advice from UNESCO Experts in the field of Materials Preparation and Evaluation. Currently, Mr. A. Deleon has joined the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare as an Expert in Informal Education.

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III. PRODUCTION OF LITERATURE FOR NEO-LITERATES

The promotion of adult literacy programmes requires a large production and supply of good quality literature for neo-literates. The purpose is to provide material for acquiring literacy skills and also to enable them to continue the use of the newly acquired skills in a functional way and thus preventing their relapse into illiteracy. The literature production programme of the Ministry of Education has three major schemes :

(i) *Prize Competition Scheme for the Production of Literature for Neo-literates* :—Through this scheme amateur as well as the professional writers are encouraged to write literature which is relevant and related in a functional way to the needs of the adults. The Ministry every year awards prizes and encourages the writers by purchasing a certain number of books.

(ii) *Grants to State Governments for the Production of Literature* :—Assistance in the form of grants is given to State Governments for the production of literature for neo-literates which includes literature for literacy work, post-literacy and supplementary reading and related teaching and reading materials. The major objective of this programme is to encourage the production of such books which are of immediate use to the neo-literates, particularly in their work and in upgrading their skills. The State Governments can utilise the funds provided under this scheme for the publication of manuscripts which might have been produced through workshops and other means but could not be printed due to lack of funds; for the preparation of manuscripts on selected topics ; for holding workshops of authors and subject-matter specialists and for the production of limited number of copies of literature on a specialised and diversified basis as an experimental programme.

(iii) *To initiate, encourage and promote the production of literature for Neo-literates directly* :—A review of literature available for neo-literate adults reveals that the bulk of the literature is in the form of stories, dramas, novels and essays which do not have much direct concern with the lives and problems of the people. There is a great need for the production of proto-type material which might be graded and fulfil a variety of aims, such as progressive improvement of reading ability (speed and comprehension), entertainment, the communication of useful information and knowledge, the teaching of skills and techniques, the introduction of new ideas and the formation of opinions, the formation, modification or changing of attitudes, the development of judgment, discrimination and critical faculties. There is also need for the teaching and training materials for educators working in the field of adult education. The Directorate of Adult Education is formulating a scheme which, to begin with, will take up the production of suitable primers in all languages ; workbooks along with the primers ; a set of three graded books ; posters, charts, etc. for the promotion of reading habits ; monographs for the workers and teachers and teaching materials, such as, charts, flip books and teachers' handbooks.

IV. ADULT SCHOOLS

The idea of setting up of Adult Schools in India was conceived as an effort to increase part-time schooling of a reduced duration for those adults who were not in a position to follow regular schooling or who had missed it during their childhood due to various reasons.

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Adult Schools were set up in India on an experimental basis during the years 1958-60 with the assistance from the Union Ministry of Education. Under this experiment about 50 Adult Schools were started in different regions of the country namely Delhi, Bombay, Mysore, Calcutta, Lucknow and Hyderabad covering different local languages prevalent in these regions. "Continuation Education for School Leavers after the Compulsory Education Age Limit of Eleven" was yet another experiment by G. K. Institute of Rural Education, Gargoti, in the State of Maharashtra during the year 1963-64.

The results of these experiments were encouraging and the movement of setting up Adult Schools grew steadily. In the Union Territory of Delhi, seven Adult Schools are being run by the Delhi Administration in different parts of the city. These schools cater to the needs of the adult learners who desire to complete their higher secondary education through regular evening classes. In the city of Bombay, the Bombay City Social Education Committee conducts, along with their regular literacy and post-literacy classes, some classes in which the adult learners are given, stage by stage, the education upto the level of Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination which normally takes seven years for a child to complete.

The Central Social Welfare Board evolved a scheme of Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women. The main objectives of this scheme are to (i) open new vistas of employment to a large number of deserving and needy women ; and (ii) create a band of competent trained workers required to man the various projects, particularly in the rural areas in the shortest possible time. Under this scheme, women in the age-group 18-30 who have had some schooling, are prepared for Middle School and Matriculation Examinations within a period of 2 years. Since the inception of the scheme in 1958 and upto March 1972, 1265 courses have been organised and about 22,000 women have benefited by these courses. This welfare

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programme with educational base has proved to be beneficial to the socially disabled women in enabling them to get employed after successful completion of the course and subsequent training The women who have successfully been able to complete these courses find employment in rural areas as Gramsevikas, teachers, nurses, midwives, family planning workers, etc. Voluntary welfare organisations are supported for organising these programmes by the Central Social Welfare Board.

V. LIBRARY SERVICES

In view of the importance of the provision of library services as a support to the programmes of Adult Education both in the rural and urban areas, vigorous efforts are needed in this field. An important step in this direction has been the enactment of Public Library Legislation in four States, namely Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Mysore. Other States, which at present, have comprehensive grant-in-aid rules for establishing such libraries at different levels, are also contemplating to enact Public Library Legislations largely on the lines of the model Bill for Public Library Acts drawn up by the Working Group on Libraries appointed by the Planning Commission.

A unique feature in the development of public libraries in the country is the development of Delhi Public Library which caters to the needs of the reading public in the Union Territory of Delhi with its branch libraries and also the mobile library vans. During 1972-73 about 35,673 adults participated in various activities such as lectures, discussions, dramas, film shows and television viewing programmes organised by the Library. The Library is rendering its services at more than 91 points in the Union Territory of Delhi.

A recent development in the field of library services is the creation of Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation. The

main objective of the Foundation is to strengthen and promote the establishment of country-wide net-work of libraries through which it will be possible to carry to all the sections of the people particularly in the rural areas, new information, new ideas, and new knowledge. The Foundation which came into existence in May 1972 has in its first phase taken up programme of strengthening district libraries including Nehru Youth Centres numbering about 500. In addition about 2,000 selected block libraries will also be taken up in this phase. In the second phase, the Foundation will be extending library services to rural areas.

VI. ADULT EDUCATION OF WORKERS

With the industrial growth and development, need to provide training and education opportunities to workers is getting special attention of Government agencies, private employers, trade unions and labour welfare agencies in India. Apart from the literacy work, the programme ncludes imparting of trade union oriented education by the Ministry of Labour through its *Central Board for Workers Education* set up in 1956. The aim of the programme is to develop stronger and more effective trade union leadership from the rank and file and to make the workers understand their roles and responsibilities in the context of the socio-economic development and their position in society, industry and the union. These objectives are achieved through a three-tier system of training Education Officers and trade union officials, worker-teachers and unit level classes for rank and file workers. The Board has trained over 376 Education Officers and trade union officials, about 25,000 worker-teachers and 1.2 million workers from over 5,000 enterprises. In March 1970, the Board set up the Indian Institute of Workers Education at Bombay to serve as a demonstration and information centre for workers education. The Institute organises train-

ing programmes and refresher courses for education officers and trade union leaders.

The Union Ministry of Education sponsored in 1960 a scheme of *Workers Social Education Institutes* on an experimental basis. The scheme aimed at stimulating a desire for knowledge in the working classes, providing facilities for general education, arousing a sense of social and civic responsibility in them and providing wholesome recreation. The first Workers Social Education Institute was set up at Indore as a pilot project in May 1960 and since then it has been implementing various literacy, cultural, recreational and other programmes both for men and women, in urban areas. Another Workers Social Education Institute was set up at Nagpur in 1968. In the light of the recommendations of an Expert Group, these Institutes are developing specific programmes for men and women and non-school going youth to meet their adult education needs.

VII. POLYVALENT ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES (SHRAMIK VIDYAPEETHS)

Considering the polyvalent or multifaceted nature of educational and training needs of working adults, the Union Ministry of Education, with the assistance of UNESCO developed a scheme of setting up a net-work of Polyvalent Adult Education Centres to provide facilities in general education including literacy, vocational training and education for civic, cultural and aesthetic aspects for the workers and those seeking employment. The project was formally established in 1966 with a view to setting up Polyvalent Adult Education Centres in the first instance in urban areas, more precisely in industrial centres. The purpose of the project is to plan and develop integrated educational and training courses of various durations for workers and prospective workers through establishment of a net-work of Polyvalent Adult Education Centres and thus demonstrate how

functionally valuable and to a fair measure financially self-sustaining programmes of continuing adult education could be organised for a large number of workers having different levels of skills, educational background etc. so as to make them better workers by improving their job competence leading to their increased productive ability and at the same time enriching their personal lives.

The first Polyvalent Adult Education Centre, with its corresponding Indian name "Shramik Vidyapeeth", was set up in March 1967, at Bombay under the Bombay City Social Education Committee. In accordance with the concept of flexibility in the programme and on the basis of specific needs of particular groups of working adults as identified through surveys, courses of different durations are organised at places and time convenient to the participants. The Bombay Centre organised a number of 'need based' and 'tailor made' courses, such as, for bench-fitting and sheet metal workers, textile weavers, autoloom weavers, secretarial services, mechanical draftsmanship for supervisors and foremen, domestic services, industrial electricity, boiler attendants, language courses. In the process of organising these courses the Centre receives concrete support of industries, of the workers and trade unions in implementing its programme. In 1968 with the financial assistance of UNESCO, the programme of Polyvalent Adult Education Centre was evaluated by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. It is observed from the findings of the study that the programme of Polyvalent Adult Education Centre has made moderate success initially and it was worthwhile to make the efforts to improve and extend it.

To share the experience of Polyvalent Adult Education Centres in India with other Asian countries, UNESCO proposed an Asian Regional Seminar on Polyvalent Adult Education Centres which was organised by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in collaboration with UNESCO (September 20-

27, 1971) at Bombay. The Seminar recognised that an integrated adult education programme would not only help the adult to improve his general educational level but also his individual capacities and work proficiency.

The successful working of the Bombay Polyvalent Adult Education Centre has created enthusiasm and interest in the programme and the second centre is in process of being set up at Delhi. The Programme is expected to be extended to cover a large population of workers in other urban and industrial areas in the country during the Fifth Five-Year Plan.

VIII. EXTENSION EDUCATION

Adult Education in the form of Extension Education has been developed mainly by Agricultural Universities in India. There are 18 Agricultural Universities which provide knowledge of new innovations to farmers and home makers through their Extension Departments. Each University has an Agricultural Communication Centre which disseminates technical knowledge among the rural people through the media of mass communication. These centres design, prepare and print educational material for cultivators and home makers through which a good deal of knowledge which has practical implications for making life more useful, productive, comfortable and regulated, is disseminated. These centres also prepare visual aids, maintain correspondence service for the benefit of farmers and field staff, serve the farming community by mobile exhibition unit and hasten the process of dissemination of knowledge of agriculture by using radio and television. Conducting actual demonstrations at cultivators' field and on the spot guidance to the farmers on the problems of farm and home, form an important feature of the farm advisory services. Of late the universities have begun to develop special programme for the rural youth

and have been organising on-the-job training courses for functionaries at different levels with a view to increasing their efficiency by imparting latest technical 'know-how' and 'do how' evolved at experimental research stations.

The Department of Community Development encourages activities such as training of youth, training of women workers, orientation of school teachers, and provides incentives to youth and women organisations with a view to making them self-reliant. For enhancing nutritional status, a few programmes aiming at nutrition education are promoted under the aegis of C.D. Blocks in the rural areas on a selective basis. These programmes seek to disseminate knowledge of the principles and practices of nutrition through training on the one hand and production and preparation of protective foods on the other. The training is imparted to the members of *Yuvak* and *Mahila Mandals* and elected representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions. The All India Radio have initiated a pilot effort at six Radio Stations for developing radio support for the programme. Women's listening clubs or *Mahila Mandals* of Applied Nutrition Programme Blocks have been supplied about 5,000 transistorised radio sets by the UNICEF.

IX. NATIONAL BOARD OF ADULT EDUCATION

Constituted by a Government resolution on 5th December 1969, the National Board of Adult Education marks an important milestone in the history of Adult Education. It advises, guides, promotes, formulates and coordinates the varied activities in the field of Adult Education. It represents the concerned Ministries/ Departments of the Union Government, educationists, workers' and farmers' organisations and other voluntary organisations working in the field. The Board in its first meeting held on May 4, 1970, considered the various problems of adult education in the country placed before it in eight agenda items, including

notes/suggestions received from State Governments, the concerned Union Ministries and also members of the Board. Fourteen resolutions on various aspects of the problem of adult education and adult literacy were passed to tackle the problems in a comprehensive manner. These resolutions, were circulated among the State Education Ministers, Vice-Chancellors of the Indian Universities, voluntary organisations and the other concerned agencies. In pursuance of a resolution, a National Seminar on *Adult Education in the Seventies* was organised at Bangalore in September, 1970.

The period after the first meeting of the Board has been marked by a vigorous follow-up action in the implementation of the programmes recommended in the resolutions on various aspects of the problems of adult education and adult literacy. A significant development is the greater involvement of universities who, in most cases, have taken up Adult Education as an important component of their programmes of the National Service Scheme. The National Board has also tried to encourage the State Governments to take up the programmes of Adult Education and Adult Literacy and give due importance to these schemes.

The second meeting of the National Board of Adult Education was held on 21st July, 1972 at New Delhi. In the inaugural address of Prof. S. Nurul Hasan, Minister for Education, Social Welfare and Culture, it was emphasised that a big drive has to be launched to eradicate illiteracy in the age-group 15—25 covering a population of about 60 million. The Board also suggested greater involvement of State Governments in programmes of Adult Education. The State Governments were advised to set up State Boards of Adult Education assisted by strong units or departments to mobilise popular and public support.

The Directorate of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare provides the necessary secretarial

and technical service to the National Board. It also acts as the technical and academic wing of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. It helps in the formulation and implementation of the programmes and schemes taken up for promotion of Adult Education and eradication of illiteracy in the country.

X. UNIVERSITIES, ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

Responsibility for adult education is now no longer regarded as a task which the universities either cannot or should not handle. Commitment to adult education is, thus, looked upon not as something peripheral but as central to the mission of Indian universities. They are abandoning their elitist and escapist conception of their role. The whole philosophy of adult education rests upon the belief that changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes are crucial to the process of development and in this task universities have an important role to play.

The University Grants Commission appointed a Committee to advise it on various matters connected with Adult Education in Universities. The Committee suggested in detail the objectives, mode of participation and organisational pattern for the involvement of universities in Adult Education programmes. The Commission has agreed to provide assistance to the universities for the setting up of Departments of Continuing/Adult Education in eleven universities. The proposals for the establishment of Departments of Continuing/Adult Education in some other universities are under the consideration of the University Grants Commission. The Universities of Rajasthan, M. S. University of Baroda, Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati and Calicut University have already set up Departments for Adult/Continuing Education. In addition, there are some other Universities such as Delhi and Patiala which are having Departments of Correspondence/Continuing Education/Community Services. The types of

programmes for which assistance is given by the Universtiy Grants Commission are professional courses, courses in leadership and management skill, general purpose course, programmes for the rural community, cultural activities, training of personnel, research in adult education relating to such categories as adult literacy, reading materials for neo-literates, libraries, media of communication and general social education. In addition to this the universities themselves, under the programme of National Service Scheme, have initiated a number of projects for promoting adult education activities and have also adopted areas in their neighbourhood for the purpose of spreading literacy and adult education.

The Conference on Continuing Education and Universities in the Asian and South Pacific Region organised by the Indian University Association with the assistance of UNESCO at Madras towards the end of December 1970, as part of the International Education Year, considered various issues relating to continuing education and the role of universities and problems relating to content courses, organisation, finance and structure and the role of various agencies. The Conference also considered some phased studies in the field of continuing education in different countries. The Conference made valuable contribution in clearly defining the role of universities, the objectives of continuing education, the problems which can be taken up, the role of the universities, the organisational arrangements, finances and international and regional cooperation. The recommendations of this Conference are a valuable guide for the Departments of Adult/Continuing Education in developing their programmes.

XI. VOLUNTARY EFFORT AND ADULT EDUCATION

A number of voluntary organisations and institutions all over India have been doing pioneering work in the field of Adult Education including Adult Literacy. The Ministry of Education

has been assisting some of the institutions doing significant work since 1953-54. Realising the need of promoting adult education through voluntary organisations, the existing Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organisations has been liberalised and is now available for such projects as adult literacy, post-literacy and libraries connected with adult literacy work, supportive services like research, production of literature including journals, training of adult education workers and their professional development and evaluation. During the last two to three years, some of the voluntary organisations like the Indian Adult Education Association, Rama Krishna Mission, Mysore State Adult Education Council, Literacy House, Bengal Social Service League, Seva Mandir, Andhra Mahila Sabha, West Bengal Committee to Eradicate Illiteracy, Gujarat State Social Education Committee, Maharashtra Social Education Committee, Bombay City Social Education Committee, Grameen Mahila Sangh, Kerala Grandhashala Sangam, Rajasthan Adult Education Association and other local level institutions and organisations have been given assistance for a variety of purposes, namely, organisation of All India Conferences and Seminars, production of journals, reading and teaching materials, translation of outstanding books on adult education into local languages, taking up of mass literacy and functional literacy programmes in selected areas and specially in backward areas and for specially handicapped section of the population, development of libraries and follow-up programmes for literate industrial workers, setting up of Institutes of Adult Education, Vidyapeeths (Rural Youth Centres), etc. With this assistance, the voluntary movement in the field of Adult Education has received a big push.

The Indian Adult Education Association is a leading voluntary organisation in the country which organises Conferences, Workshops, correspondence courses and brings out journals and various publications. To support the cause of literacy, the Association has instituted *Nehru Literacy Award*, which is given every year to an individual or an institution for outstanding

adult literacy work. Mysore State Adult Education Council runs several institutions called *Vidyapeeths* (Rural Youth Centre) which train the rural folk for leadership and functions like the Folk High Schools of Denmark. The *Vidyapeeths* provides general as well as practical education to selected groups of rural people in the age-group of 18-30 in residential courses of short duration of five months. Education in these institutions is production-oriented and emphasis is on agriculture and rural crafts. The West Bengal Committee to Eradicate Illiteracy is engaged in mass literacy campaigns and runs adult literacy centres, courses for out-of-school children etc.

XII. MASS MEDIA IN ADULT EDUCATION

Expansion of adult literacy and adult education programmes calls for an effective utilisation of mass media such as radio, television, films, newspapers, etc. In India, limited use of these media has been made for adult education purposes directly.

A significant use of *radio* was made in the fifties when an experiment called **"Radio Rural Forums"** was started in the country of using radio, in a systematic and organised manner, for purposes of development and for solution of problems by community decisions and action. Studies on the impact of this programme have shown the spectacular success of the experiment in transmitting knowledge and demonstrated the potentials of radio as an agent of change. Lately, the Farm and Home Units of All India Radio, have been broadcasting programmes of interest to farmers who gather together in the form of discussion groups called **'Charcha Mandals'** and listen to the broadcasts and discuss problems raised therein in the evenings. There are in all thirtyeight Farm and Home Units and the number is likely to further increase in the coming years. The **'Charcha Mandal'** also constitutes the core group around which activities of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy are organised

under the integrated project of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy. Apart from these organised efforts, the programmes on radio meant for general public also perform the functions of educating the masses in an indirect manner.

One year after the introduction of *television* in India on an experimental basis, a pilot experiment called **"Social Education through Television"** was taken up. The telecasts were aimed at giving to the viewers information on citizenship education thereby effecting changes in their attitudes and behaviour towards certain civic problems. It was found that the programme made significant gains in all three respects i.e., the members of the teleclubs had better information about the topics covered, their attitudes had changed and behaviour was also positively effected. In 1967, another experiment on the use of television as a medium of mass communication called **'Krishi Darshan'** was launched in Delhi with a view to giving the farmers information on improved farm technology and discuss agricultural problems faced by them in farming. Eighty teleclubs were established in villages around Delhi and the TV programmes were telecast twice a week. The experiment revealed that television was an effective medium in disseminating new ideas and in persuading the farmers to accept improved practices. Further, it led to reinforcement, where other media of personal sources were existing. Television also proved useful in the diffusion of new farm information and in changing attitudes towards improved practices, rather than their actual adoption. The television programmes were appreciated by all the teleclub members and the educational value of the new medium was accepted by them. They also confirmed that the programmes were beneficial to them and that they got useful and timely information, which gave them sufficient motivation for adopting these practices. They also wanted the frequency of the programmes to be increased to at least three days per week. Based on this feedback, the Television Centre agreed to increase the duration as well as the

frequency of the programme and introduced the desired changes in the presentation of the programmes. 'Krishi Darshan' is now shown three days in a week for half an hour's duration. A proposal to use television for imparting literacy skills useful in daily life, to illiterate population is presently being considered. It envisages use of television in this important task on an experimental basis and on a small scale, to begin with, in Delhi. Although, television is currently available for such educational programmes only in the viewing range of centres at Delhi, Bombay and Srinagar, it is to be extended manifold in the Fifth Five Year Plan. Besides, the International Satellite will also be used in transmitting educational programmes for the development of the country using television as a medium. The government is taking steps to utilise the satellite system to its optimum capacity for combating problems such as those of eradication of illiteracy, family planning, agricultural production.

The use of *films* in educating the masses has been made for a long time. The Films Division of the Government of India has been producing documentary films on various subjects with a view to giving the viewers information on various developmental activities going on in the country and it is compulsory for every cinema house to show such films before the start of every feature film. These documentaries cover wide range of subjects dealing with problems of health, sanitation, education, defence, agriculture, family planning, community development etc. Apart from this, the Media Units and the Field Publicity Departments of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting use these films for being shown in remotest parts of the country through the use of projectors and Mobile Vans and the messages are carried to the adult population and general public. Recently, there have been a few films, which were aimed at promoting literacy programmes and other adult education programmes taken up by the Central Government. At the instance of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, the Films Division,

Government of India have produced two such films; one of these films entitled 'Kisan Saksharata Yojana'—a black and white film of thirty minutes duration—depicts the objectives, contents and methods followed in Farmers' Functional Literacy Scheme as part of the integrated project so that a general idea with regard to the progress of the Scheme is conveyed. The film is primarily motivational in nature. Another film entitled "Shramik Vidyapeeth (Polyvalent Adult Education Centre, Bombay)"—20 minutes film in colour, depicts the application of Poloyvalent approach to planning and organisation of courses for working adults through a real story of a participant. As mentioned earlier, the first Polyvalent Adult Education Centre (Shramik Vidyapeeth) set up in Bombay offers 'need-based' and 'tailor-made' courses to suit the educational needs of working adults. Earlier, the Films Division, Government of India produced a film entitled 'Progress Through Literacy' highlighting the achievements of mass approach in eradicating illiteracy through the Gram Shikshan Mohim approach. In addition, a few voluntary organisations such as West Bengal Committee to eradicate Illiteracy have also produced films highlighting the attempts made by these agencies to eradicate illiteracy as well as the success achieved by them in this work. One such film entitled "Pratham Paath" (First Lesson) was also produced by the Committee.

Newspapers in regional languages are considered a very suitable medium for use. The editors of daily or weekly newspapers will be approached to have one or two columns in their dailies or weeklies for providing materials of interest to neo-literates. The provision of columns would also lighten the burden of providing separate reading material for neo-literates and at the same time provide the information to improve their technical knowledge.

XIII. PROGRAMMES FOR NON-STUDENT YOUTH

Consequent on the recommendations made by the National Advisory Board on Youth, the Ministry of Education prepared a National Programme for Non-student Youth. The National Programme includes the establishment of Youth Centres at the district and block levels and training programme for youth leaders. Nehru Yuvak Kendras have been established in 100 districts. The decision to establish the Nehru Yuvak Kendras is the most comprehensive nation-wide initiative taken in this regard. The Kendras will provide training and education to young people according to their felt needs and the requests of the local community; entertainment, recreation and cultural programmes and leisure time activities; strengthening the links and cohesion of young people belonging to different social strata and various educational or professional groups; participation of young people in the community life and in the decision-marking process. Thus, the educational goals of Nehru Yuvak Kendras will be pursued in a direct and indirect way through learning, through useful practical work by cultural or physical performance and by contributing to the solution of various public problems, particularly those concerning youth.

Earlier this year, the Union Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture Prof. S. Nurul Hassan said in his inaugural address at the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education, "If our commitment to socialism is to have any meaning, we must...give a mass-base to our educational system and ensure that it provides equality of educational opportunity for all. Two programmes are directly relevant to giving a mass-base to the educational system. The first is the development of elementary education...the second programme is that of Adult Education specially the informal education of young persons in the age-group of 15—25, in close association with the Nehru Yuvak Kendras". This Committee indicated four priority areas in the field of informal education namely.—(a)

informal education for the age-group 6—14; (b) youth programmes for the age-groups 15—25; (c) informal higher education, open university; and (d) informal education for adult and continuing education. Working groups have been formed to spell out in details the programmes of informal education in these priority areas. A big programme of informal education will be taken up during the Fifth Five Year Plan.

XIV. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The need for *research* in Adult Education has been recognised as an important supportive service to the programmes in the field. A survey conducted in 1963 by the Directorate of Adult Education (then the National Fundamental Education Centre) revealed that in a period of two decades prior to that about 100 research studies were conducted in India having bearing on Adult/Social Education. Most of the studies were in the areas mentioned below :—

(i) *Adult Literacy*.—Majority of the studies are in the field of adult literacy. They are mainly related to problems like motivation for literacy, attitude towards adult literacy, various approaches to the problems of raising literacy level, methods of literacy teaching, drop out from literacy classes, standards of literacy and retention of literacy.

(ii) *Reading material for neo-literates*.—This is the second major area where survey and descriptive type of studies are being done. Under this category emphasis is laid on the preparation of basic vocabularies for adults, survey of reading materials, assessment of reading needs, interests and habits of new reading public including new literates and promotion of the use of reading materials.

(iii) *Libraries.*—There are very few studies in the area of libraries for neo-literates. These studies have generally concerned themselves with the problems of determining the extent of the use of libraries, particularly in rural areas, adequacy or otherwise of financial provision for libraries etc.

(iv) *Miscellaneous activities in Adult Education.*—The studies in this section relate to various activities such as rural reconstruction, role of Social Education in Community Development and assessment of the performance of Social Education Workers.

The basic purpose of *evaluation* in Adult Education is to improve programme. Evaulation throws light on the successes or failure of programmes, on merits and demerits of the schemes, on good and bad features of the ideas implemented experimentally in adult education. Scientific evaluation is a growing field in the area of Adult Education and there have been evaluations of specific programmes to know their impact on the people. Attempts are also made to measure changes in peoples' knowledge, attitudes, behavioural aspects and other allied interests. The Directorate of Adult Education is one of the principal agencies which conducts research and evaluation in Adult Education. Some of the studies conducted by the Directorate relate to Effectiveness of Social Education Schemes in selected areas, Evaluation of Janta College in Delhi, Evaluation of Integrated Literacy Method, Evaulation of Radio Farm Forum, TV for Social Education, Evaluation of Delhi Literacy Project, A Quantitative Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Pilot Rural Agricultural Television Project in Delhi, Pilot Evaluation Study of the Functional Literacy Project in Lucknow, An Operational Evaluation of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy Project, A Socio-Economic Impact of Functional Literacy in three districts in India etc. A number of other studies are in progress.

In order to develop suitable programme for adult education, research and evaluative studies need to be taken up on

current problems in adult education and adult literacy including the modern trends. The findings of these researches and evalutative studies would help develop a sound programme and enable planners and administrators to take correct decisions in deciding the approaches to be followed and strategies to be adopted for eradicating illiteracy and promoting adult education work in the country.

THE PROSPECTS

This brief review of some of the significant programmes and projects covering a wide sector of interests and target groups indicates that even though the task of Adult Education in India is stupendous, a number of developments have taken place, guidelines for action have emerged, and some significant projects have already been initiated which, if vigorously supported and pursued, both in terms of definite policies and provision of resources in money, men and materials, would be a turning point in launching upon a well-conceived and fully integerated programme of Adult Education in the context of *lifelong education during the Seventies*".

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"The concept of life-long education is particularly appropriate in a country where large numbers of the people have been denied the basic educational facilities and even where such facilities exist, large numbers are unable to avail of the same on account of socio-economic situation. Formal education in this context becomes often a door to the privileged and works against, though unintentionally, the goal of a free just society with equality of opportunities. It is, therefore, imperative that we provide increasing opportunities for all adults to learn according to their interests and needs and to ensure that every person has the opportunity to develop his talent and is not deprived of facilities on account of his failure to go through the formal education system at one stage or another."

Prof. S. NURUL HASAN
Union Minister of Education, Social Welfare, & Culture,
Bombay, November, 1972.
(*Message to the 25th All India Adult Education Conference.*)